

Preparing Field Grade Leaders for Today and Tomorrow

Brigadier General Volney J. Warner, U.S. Army, and
Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, U.S. Army, Retired, Ph.D.

The need to teach Soldiers and leaders how to think rather than what to think has never been clearer. To defeat adaptive enemies, we must out-think them in order to out-fight them.

—Les Brownlee and Peter J. Schoomaker¹

THE MISSION of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC) at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, is to educate and develop leaders for full-spectrum joint, interagency, and multinational operations in support of Army operational requirements. This mission remains unchanged from previous years; however, the world in which our graduates must operate is changing rapidly and the threats to U.S. national security continue to evolve at an ever-increasing pace.

To be forward-thinking and respond to the needs of the Army in meeting the challenges of today's dynamic operational environment, CGSC has undergone a complete transformation in the way it accomplishes its assigned mission. This transformation has resulted in a comprehensive program of initiatives that have caused major changes in the student population, educational philosophy, curriculum design and delivery, instructional methodology, faculty composition, and application of simulations and computer technology in the classroom. The goal of this transformation, which is a dynamic process designed to ensure continued currency and relevancy, is to provide the Army with adaptive leaders better armed to operate successfully in the complex operational environment they will confront on leaving Fort Leavenworth.



U.S. Army

BG Bill West, U.S. Army, Retired, helps a future battalion commander develop instinctual leadership skills during a Tactical Commanders Development Program exercise, November 2005.

Impetus to Change

In the past, CGSC focused much of its effort on preparing officers for conventional operations. That was a rational approach to the quite real and dominant Cold War threat. That conventional focus no doubt played a major role in preparing the Army for its crucial part in planning and executing Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, in which U.S. and Coalition forces so quickly defeated Iraqi forces and liberated Kuwait. However, when the Soviet Union collapsed, the strategic clarity of the Cold War evaporated. After a momentary euphoria, the Army and the Nation were presented with an ugly world full of strategic ambiguity characterized by a complex network of potential dangers. Those dangers were made only too clear with the 9/11 attacks, the subsequent Global War on Terrorism, and the demands of ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Now, as described in the 2005 Army Posture Statement, we find ourselves in a protracted war unlike any other in our history, prosecuted not by states, but by “extremists employing irregular

means to erode our power and resolve.” In this war, “our adversaries threaten the ideas that form the bedrock of our society, endangering our freedoms and way of life.”²

In this volatile and demanding conflict, Army leaders at all levels must contend with a full range of circumstances marked by uncertainty, ambiguity, and asymmetric threats. The current operational reality—a transforming Army at war—demands that CGSC graduates be prepared to assume warfighting duties immediately after graduation. They must be confident, competent leaders and creative problem-solvers who understand the complexities of the operational environment and possess the adaptability to react to ambiguity and rapidly changing situations.

Creating Adaptive Leaders

Meeting the Army’s needs in both training and education is important. CGSC must balance training for certainty with education for uncertainty. Training in higher order Army systems is still required. Training is required to master facts in any professional school. Accordingly, CGSC trains its graduates on enduring doctrinal principles; professional vocabulary; and emerging lessons, systems, and the broad skills they will need in their next assignment. However, graduates also need education to prepare them to develop solutions to new problems under highly uncertain conditions—not just in their next assignments but for the rest of their military careers.

Success comes from well-trained leaders who are educated for judgment and able to adapt to evolving requirements and apply critical reasoning and creative thinking to respond to complex, ambiguous problems. Tactical competence is necessary, but not sufficient for mission success in the new world of security challenges. Those educated to adapt will succeed through careful execution of trained tasks, but they must also be able to identify unique problems as departures from those studied and respond by designing and implementing unique solutions for the new problems.

CGSC’s goal is that an educated officer should recognize unique circumstances and adapt plans and actions in unfamiliar environments to be successful quickly and effectively without resorting to potentially costly trial and error. Given that goal and the needs of the Army at war, CGSC has transformed its approach to educating and training field-grade

officers. The result is the current Intermediate Level Education (ILE) program, which is the culmination of studies and analyses dating back to 1997. One of the most important of these studies was the 2000-2001 Army Training and Leader Development Panel (ATLDP) chartered by the Chief of Staff of the Army (CSA) to examine the state of Army training, education, and leader-development programs to meet the Army’s transformation objectives.³ Based on the results of the final ATLDP report, the CSA directed CGSC to adapt the institution to provide all Army field-grade officers the education they need to prepare themselves to operate successfully across the full range of military operations “for their 10th through 20th years of service.”⁴ The end state of ILE would be “self-aware, adaptive leaders” who have the requisite tactical, technical, and leader competencies to deal with the challenges of high-intensity combat and the ambiguities inherent in stability operations and support operations.⁵

As a member of the joint professional military education community, CGSC also received guidance from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS). The directives in CJCS’s “Instruction on Officer Professional Military Education Policy” (OPMEP) dictate that the CGSC curriculum must develop joint awareness, perspective, and attitudes to prepare graduates to operate in a joint, interagency, and multinational environment and bring a joint perspective to bear in their tactical, operational, strategic, and critical thinking as well as professional actions.⁶ This guidance reinforces and is nested within the CSA’s focus on developing a campaign-quality Army with joint and expeditionary capabilities.

ILE Evolves

The ATLDP’s recommendations and subsequent Army and joint guidance resulted in a major revision of the education program at CGSC. The ILE program, first piloted in academic year (AY) 2002-2003, was to provide a quality, tailored education to

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produce field-grade officers grounded in warfighting doctrine and possessing the technical, tactical, and leadership competencies and skills needed to be successful in their respective career fields into the 21st Century.⁷ Under the new program, CGSC would no longer have a selection board because all Army majors would receive intermediate-level education. The decision to provide every major in the Army with a shared common educational experience resulted in significant changes to the curriculum, methods of instruction, and makeup of CGSC faculty.

The traditional 10-month CGSC course was replaced by two courses: the ILE common-core course and the Advanced Operations and Warfighting Course (AOWC). Every major in the Army receives the ILE common-core curriculum. For operations career field officers, officers from selected functional areas, selected Reserve Component officers, and the traditional complement of sister service and international officers, the common-core course is delivered in residence at Fort Leavenworth. Generally, officers in the other career fields and special branches attend the common-core course (approximately 3 months in length) at one of several satellite campus sites (Fort Belvoir, Virginia; Fort Lee, Virginia; and Fort Gordon, Georgia) where they are taught by qualified CGSC faculty permanently assigned to the site.

After completing the ILE common-core curriculum, operations career field officers remain at Fort Leavenworth for AOWC, which immediately follows the core curriculum. This course, approximately 7 months long, provides officers a graduate-level education in strategic, operational, and tactical warfighting and prepares them for battalion command and higher level staff positions. The focus of the instruction ranges from Joint Force Land Component Command down to brigade-level operations.

Officers in the nonoperations career fields who attend the common-core curriculum at one of the satellite campus sites receive additional functional-area-specific training in lieu of

AOWC to complete their intermediate-level education. The nature of this training depends on their respective career fields and might include qualification courses, advanced civil schooling, training with industry, and so on.

A New Curriculum

Given the dictates to meet both the joint educational requirements that OPMEP mandates and Army objectives for intermediate-level officer education derived from the ATLDP and the Army Campaign Plan, the central focus becomes what to put into the curriculum and how best to teach the required material. Given the rapidly changing nature and complexity of the operational environment, CGSC must adapt just as rapidly to ensure that the curriculum, methods of instruction, and faculty remain timely, current, and relevant.

In a time of war, particularly given the nature of the challenges in Iraq and Afghanistan, the natural tendency would be to focus solely on counterinsurgency and stability and reconstruction operations. However, responding to the CSA's guidance, which clearly states that CGSC is to prepare students to deal with the full range of military operations for the next 10 years of their careers, the curriculum must prepare officers for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as do a great deal more. While the curriculum emphasizes counterinsurgency and stability and reconstruction operations, it must take a much broader approach that includes a thorough consideration of these key activities within the full spectrum



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Through the elective program, CGSC students can acquire depth in a variety of areas, including counterinsurgency, urban operations, stability and reconstruction operations, and media relations.

Required Reading

David Galula's seminal *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Westport, CT: Praeger Publishing, 30 May 2005) is now required reading at CGSC. Students use the book to evaluate historical case studies such as the Philippine Insurrection, the Malaya Emergency, and the French-Algerian War. Supplemented with doctrinal discussions, these case studies culminate in a coursewide seminar on contemporary counterinsurgency and stability operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Senior commanders fresh from the theaters of operation also participate in the seminar.

of conflict that, as U.S. Army Field Manual 1, *The Army*, defines, also includes offensive, defensive, and civil support operations.⁸ Ultimately, CGSC must produce pragmatic practitioners who use innovation, critical reasoning, relevant experience, and professional judgment to solve a wide range of ambiguous and complex problems that graduates will face as staff officers and commanders during the rest of their military careers.

A New Philosophy

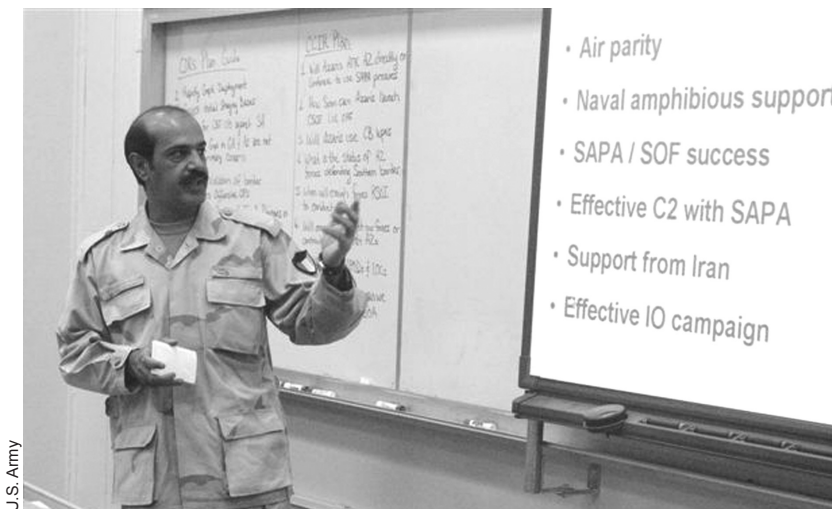
To deal with the complexities and challenges of post-Cold War full-spectrum operations, CGSC has changed its educational philosophy. The institution has adjusted its approach from training students what to think to focus more on teaching students how to think. This approach emphasizes critical reasoning; creative thinking; complex problem solving; service and joint, interagency, and multinational competence; transformation; cultural awareness; and regional expertise.

CGSC recognizes that students now arrive with a vast array of operational experience that includes peacekeeping and humanitarian-assistance operations as well as combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. The student body's experience is broadened and deepened by the presence of students from sister services and international military students from around the world. Therefore, the curriculum and teaching methodology are designed to help students link what they will be learning with the vast experience and knowledge they already possess.

The emphasis is on mastering the knowledge and processes that underlie performance rather than on the performance task itself. Accordingly, CGSC emphasizes the adult learning model and Socratic instruction. This provides students with discovery-learning opportunities where learning occurs inductively. That is, students explore and experiment with tasks to infer and learn strategies for effective performance. Emphasizing school solutions to solve complex problems is highly discouraged. Instead,

the idea behind this guided discovery is for students to develop and test hypotheses about what they are learning and allow them to integrate those findings with existing knowledge.

Using the adult learning model, instruction focuses on education for judgment and adaptability rather than on mere transfer of information. Emphasis is on adaptability skills such as intuition, critical and creative thinking, and self awareness.⁹ Historically, education for judgment requires an experienced, knowledgeable faculty addressing complex issues critically



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An international student briefs full-spectrum operations during an iteration of CGSC's ongoing coursewide exercise.

- Air parity
- Naval amphibious support
- SAPA / SOF success
- Effective C2 with SAPA
- Support from Iran
- Effective IO campaign

examined by engaged students within a small-group environment. The crucible of the small-group critiques and associated brainstorming helps develop mental agility and intellectual prowess—key traits necessary for exercising wisdom and dealing with the uncertainty of current and future operational environments.

Responsive Course Content

With the change in instructional methodology, the curriculum's content has dramatically changed during the transition to ILE. The school retained emphasis on leadership, decisionmaking, logistics, planning, and operations. However, the curriculum is undergoing an evolutionary development process by implementing changes addressing joint, inter-agency, and multinational issues; Army challenges in meeting sustained expeditionary operations; modular force tactics and techniques; cultural awareness; counterinsurgency operations; and the unique challenges of stability and reconstruction operations at the tactical, operational, and strategic levels.¹⁰ The curriculum is constantly being updated to keep pace with the changing nature of the operational environment; accordingly, 30 to 40 percent of the curriculum is revised each academic year.

Improvements to the curriculum include the extensive use of practicums; historical case studies; application of information technologies and simulations; and instruction on current and emerging Army, joint, and Department of Defense systems and processes. The objective is to provide a common operational culture for all graduates by focusing on terminology, values, attitudes, and the warrior ethos. This approach also presents the students with complex problems that provide them with a set of analogies on which they can draw when confronted with similar situations in follow-on assignments.¹¹

Recognizing the immediate needs of the Army in ongoing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, the curriculum offers substantial instruction on countering insurgencies as well as instruction on stability and reconstruction operations, which are closely related to activities aimed at countering guerrilla activities. Using as a core document the interim counterinsurgency manual that the Combined Arms Center Doctrine Directorate produced in 2004, CGSC has revised the curriculum to include much broader training and emphasis in cultural awareness, counterinsurgency, stability and reconstruction

Curriculum Adjustments for Counterinsurgency (COIN)

Doctrinal education on countering insurgencies has become an integral part of the U.S. Command and General Staff Officer Course (CGSOC) program of instruction. In the last 1-1/2 years, the staff has significantly revised the curriculum to include a much broader education and more emphasis on areas such as cultural awareness, COIN, stability and reconstruction operations, and information operations. During the 10-month CGSOC experience of an Operations Career Field officer, there are 555 hours of core curriculum contact time. COIN and COIN-related subjects make up 201 hours of that total (36 percent).

Also, the average student takes 40 hours of COIN-related electives. (Each of the 8 electives includes 24 hours of contact time.) Contemporary operating environment (COE) and COIN-related exercises, based on the Georgia-Armenia-Azerbaijan-Turkey scenario, make up another 165 hours of the course. Therefore, the average Operations Career Field officer now gets 406 hours (45 percent of the course including exercises) of COE and COIN-related instruction during CGSOC. Planned language electives to be taught by the Defense Language Institute (DLI) will ultimately add to this total, but student participation in language electives will not be determined until after student assignments are known.

Overview of the Core COIN Program

The core COIN program consists of a separate course called I100, Stability Operations (18 classroom contact hours). Students are required to read David Galula's *Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice* and portions of U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) (Draft) 3-07.22, *Counterinsurgency Operations* (soon to be replaced by FM 3-24, *Counterinsurgency*), as part of the course. Blocks of COIN instruction in the course cover the following topics:

- Stability and Reconstruction Operations: Terms, Definitions, Characteristics, Effects (Joint and Army Doctrine).
- COIN Warfare: Theory and Practice (Galula).
- Current COIN Doctrine.
- COIN Analysis Framework.
- Faculty Presentation: U.S. in the Philippines (1898-1908).
- Foreign Internal Defense (FID) Doctrine: Joint Publication 3-07.1, *Foreign Internal Defense*.
- Training and Advising Case Study Methodology.
- Historical Case Study 1: Brits in Malaya (1945-1962).
- Historical Case Study 2: French in Algeria (1949-1962).
- Operations FID/Advisor Case Study 3: Soviets in Afghanistan.
- OIF/OEF Current Operations.

operations, foreign internal defense, military support to civil authorities, information operations, civil affairs, and foreign languages.¹² The traditional military decisionmaking process has been broadened to include regional analytical considerations.

As part of this ongoing effort, CGSC also offers courses in regional, cultural, and historical studies and brings in experts like retired General Anthony Zinni, former commander of Central Command, and Imam Sayed Hassan al-Qazwini, an Iraq-born Islamic cleric, as guest speakers to enhance the program of study. Guest speakers, both from inside and outside the government and military, such as Ambassador James Dobbins, journalist Robert Kaplan, and author and strategic planner Thomas P.M. Barnett, are brought in to expose the students to diverse points of view and complement the curriculum, thereby maintaining its relevance and currency.

In the ILE core and the AOWC curriculum, CGSC uses a common teaching scenario that includes the region that encompasses Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Turkey. This scenario provides a backdrop for planning full-spectrum operations at the strategic, operational, and tactical levels of war. The scenario incorporates conventional and unconventional threats; complex cultural, regional, and multinational coalition programs; and civil-military issues. Instruction using this scenario includes theory and practical applications involving nonkinetic aspects of combat power (leadership, protection, maneuver, and information), as well as kinetic combat power (firepower).

To achieve depth of study, maximize flexibility, and support assignment-oriented training and education, the CGSC curriculum also includes an array of electives offered by the five teaching departments. These concentrated areas of study focus on many aspects of full-spectrum operations, ranging from conventional operations to counterinsurgency, urban operations, stability and reconstruction operations, media relations, leadership in battle, and area studies.

Students choose eight electives, one of which must be a regionally focused course, giving them the flexibility to tailor their program of study to meet their individual needs and to fill gaps or enhance learning in key areas. The timing of the elective program also permits them more flexibility later in the academic year to focus their learning in preparation for their next assignment. The most recent assignment-oriented initiative includes focused electives (regional studies, cultural understanding, and language skills) for student follow-on assignments to Iraq and Afghanistan.

There are several specialty tracks that students may pursue, among them the Special Operations Forces (SOF) track and the Joint Advanced Warfighting Studies (JAWS) program. The SOF track, a credentialing course for Special Forces, psychological operations, and civil affairs officers, is a cooperative effort between CGSC and the Special Warfare Center supported by a CGSC-assigned special operations cadre. The JAWS program focuses on joint operations for sister service officers and selected Army officers.

Also, within the elective program are several focused programs of study that include Strategist, Joint Planner, Space Operations, Air Operations,

and Military Historian. These programs require the student to complete a specific set of electives and result in the awarding of Army additional-skill identifiers.

A Responsive Faculty

The curriculum is not the only thing that has changed at CGSC. The interdisciplinary teaching team approach, first introduced during the ILE pilot program, has direct application to the concept of educating for adaptability. Under this approach, an interdepartmental team of 12 faculty members is assigned primary responsibility for each student section of about 64 students. Although team teaching—the delivery of instruction by two or more

CGSC's quest to better prepare Army field-grade officers includes movement to web-based delivery of all curriculum. This provides the opportunity for first-class, up-to-date materials that can be adapted in real time and published to students via the Web without the costs and time constraints associated with printed course materials.

faculty members together with a single small group of students—occurs only intermittently, such as during staff exercises and integrated practicums, the organization into teams generally enhances collaboration, curriculum integration, and a shared sense of purpose among the faculty. This approach ensures that a dedicated faculty member mentors each student and that each teaching team can run small-group, low-level, low-cost, PC-based exercises. This also provides a sustainable faculty tempo that ensures high academic rigor, continuous faculty professional development, and operational and educational innovation.

The ILE program, with its emphasis on the adult-learning model, demands a high-quality faculty with advanced educational skills, subject-matter expertise, relevant experience, and sufficient continuity to allow for professional development. These faculty characteristics are essential to the education for judgment and adaptability process. Therefore, the faculty is one of the decisive lines of operation in CGSC's transformation. Thus, CGSC has endeavored to hire the most highly qualified faculty for the five teaching departments.

Significantly, from AY 2000-2001 to AY 2005-2006, the faculty has made a dramatic shift from a civilian to military ratio of 10:90 to a ratio of 60:40 (moving to 70:30). This approach capitalizes on the available pool of highly qualified military retirees and civilian specialists while freeing up military positions to support other Army operational needs. Therefore, in addition to the assigned active-duty military members, the faculty now includes many highly qualified individuals, including a number of former battalion and brigade commanders, other retired officers (including many from sister services) with broad Army and joint experience, and civilian academicians from varied disciplines. The result is a dynamic mix of military and civilian instructors with diverse backgrounds and credentials who have invigorated the curriculum.

An added benefit to the civilianization of the faculty has been a reduction in instructor turnover, thus better preserving institutional knowledge and providing time for further professional development as educators. This has enabled the faculty to master a broad, comprehensive, and ever-changing professional body of knowledge to maintain currency. The result has been an ongoing collaboration that

routinely makes relevant contributions to furthering professional understanding and creating new professional knowledge that benefits CGSC as well as the Army and joint community.

As a means of maintaining a cutting-edge faculty, CGSC requires teaching faculty to stay current on military operations and affords instructors opportunities to participate in military exercises around the country and abroad. Thus, the CGSC faculty is constantly acquiring fresh knowledge and experience from the operating force that can be returned to the classroom. CGSC also seeks various other means of keeping the faculty connected to the field, including visits to training centers, travel to joint headquarters, participation in oral-history projects with soldiers fresh from the field, service on Center for Army Lessons Learned analysis teams, and attendance at professional conferences. Military and civilian instructors have also deployed to support operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. These instructors bring back material and ideas to help improve the curriculum.

Exploiting Teaching Technology

CGSC's quest to better prepare Army field-grade officers includes movement to web-based delivery of all curriculum. This provides the opportunity for first-class, up-to-date materials that can be adapted in real time and published to students via the Web without the costs and time constraints associated with printed course materials. The electronic venue facilitates a rapidly evolving curriculum that provides access to current students as well as to graduates who have real-time reachback access to current course materials and references for as long as they have an Army Knowledge Online account. In combination with the Battle Command Knowledge System, current students and faculty can correspond directly with officers in the field and others inside the curriculum for real-time professional dialog and collaboration.

In an associated area, CGSC has aggressively integrated current and emerging battle command technologies into the curriculum. Army Battle Command Systems, Command Post of the Future, and web-based collaboration tools like Information Dissemination Management-Tactical are used throughout the resident course. These systems, combined with low-overhead simulations, create a relevant experiential learning environment and enhance the development of decisionmaking skills.

The transformation of the end-of-course capstone exercise, Prairie Warrior, into a series of complex, multi-spectrum exercises conducted throughout the academic year, greatly increases each student's opportunity for decisionmaking experiences. These programs are being expanded to include real-time collaboration with other services' intermediate-level education courses.

On the Right Track

In summary, there has been a transformation at CGSC, where the ILE program is continually adapting to provide graduates with better tools to meet the evolving challenges our forces face in the field. The emphasis must remain on educating Army leaders who know how to apply critical reasoning and creative thinking in solving problems in complex, ambiguous

situations across the broad spectrum of conflict.

In *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War*, Eliot Cohen and John Gooch conclude that failure to learn, failure to anticipate, and failure to adapt are the root causes of why militaries fail.¹³ CGSC graduates will have ample opportunity to apply what they have learned as they anticipate and adapt to situations, often in settings where the price of failure can be measured in lives lost or national interests irreparably harmed. That fact is never far from the minds of the CGSC staff and faculty and will ensure that curriculum and teaching methods remain current and relevant to help our graduates outthink and outfight our enemies. As Charles Darwin said: "It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but rather the most responsive to change."¹⁴ **MR**

NOTES

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3. "Army Training and Leader Development Panel Report (Officers)," U.S. Army Combined Arms Center and Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, February 2001, 3-1.

4. *Ibid.*, 3-11.

5. *Ibid.*, 2-57.

6. Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction (CJCSI) 1800.01B, "Instruction on Officer Professional Military Education Policy," Washington, D.C., 30 August 2004, A-A-1 and A-A-2; E-1.

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9. Institute for Defense Analyses Document Number D-3114, "Learning to Adapt to Asymmetric Threats," Alexandria, Virginia, August 2005, S-2, on-line at <www.d-n.net/fcs/pdf/learning_to_adapt.pdf>, accessed 27 January 2006.

10. BG Volney J. Warner, Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army, CGSC, "Leader Development for the Modular Force" (speech presented at the 2005 Association of the United States Army annual meeting and exposition, undated).

11. For more discussion on the use of analogies in strategic decisionmaking, see Giovanni Gavetti and Jan W. Rivkin, "How Strategists Really Think: Tapping the Power of Analogy," *Harvard Business Review* (April 2005): 54-63.

12. U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, *Counterinsurgency* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: interim draft, 2004). No other information given.

13. Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: Free Press, 1990), 233-43.

14. Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species By Means of Natural Selection* (Westminster, MD: Bantam Classics, 1999).

Brigadier General Volney J. Warner is the Deputy Commandant, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College (CGSC). He received an B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy, an M.B.A. from Harvard, and is a graduate of CGSC and a Senior Service College Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace. His numerous staff and command assignments include Brigade Commander, 1st Armored Division; Special Assistant to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs; and Director, Strategy and Analysis, J5, U.S. Joint Forces Command.

*Lieutenant Colonel James H. Willbanks, U.S. Army, Retired, is Director of the Department of Military History, CGSC. He received a B.A. from Texas A&M University, an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Kansas, and is a graduate of CGSC and the School of Advanced Military Studies. He has served in various command and staff positions in the continental United States, Vietnam, Panama, Japan, and Germany. He is the author of *Abandoning Vietnam* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2004) and *The Battle of An Loc* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005).*